

Poughkeepsie Head Start Center recovers from budget cuts

Roberto Cruz, Poughkeepsie Journal 10:17 p.m. EDT April 25, 2014

Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney was in Poughkeepsie on Friday to learn about the services provided to low-income children at the city's Head Start Center on Delafield Street.



(Photo: Roberto Cruz/Poughkeepsie Journal)

SHARE 24 CONNECTTWEET 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE

From Washington to Poughkeepsie, success is about making smart choices. When Congress last year chose not to adopt a budget and across-the-board cuts took shape in September, the Poughkeepsie Head Start Center of Astor Services for Children & Families suffered. A 5.27 percent reduction to Head Start grantees resulted in a \$340,000 cut at the Poughkeepsie facility. Eighty-six spots for children were lost and 22 positions let go.

The federal government has since restored and, in fact, increased funding for Head Start, but not before proving how costly inaction can be, according to Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, D-Cold Spring, who was at the Poughkeepsie center on Friday.

"Families pay the price when Washington doesn't get its act together," Maloney said. "It's why we need to make better choices."

Maloney, a co-sponsor of the Strong Start for America's Children Act, a bill to expand and improve early learning initiatives for children, toured the 12-classroom facility on Friday and read to a classroom of students before recess.

He called investments in Head Start one of the smartest investments the nation can make.

Center Director Elizabeth Strelchun said the center provides children a warm, nurturing environment, in addition to health services — such as checkups and eyesight tests — and hot meals.

"If we have budget cuts, (the children) miss out," Strelchun said.

Astor operates all Head Start programs in Dutchess County.

The Poughkeepsie center serves 233 children at the Delafield Street location and with home visits.

Roberto Cruz: RCruz2@poughkeepsiejournal.com; 845-437-4843; Twitter: @RobertoCruzPJ

VIDEO

To see a video report for this story, visit www.PoughkeepsieJournal.com

SHARE 24 CONNECTTWEET 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE